

NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society
No. 62 February 2023



Chairman's Notes

There have been some adventurous times since the society's meetings began to return to normal after the Covid lockdowns.

NAIL-BITING TIMES

Andrew Cook was delayed by a motorway accident on his way to talk to us in September about the Great Train Robbery. He arrived in the nick of time, just as your desperate chairman was starting an alternative presentation.

Andrew Breeze kept his promise to talk to us in October, even though it meant him undertaking to fly from Spain. We'd offered to meet him at the airport but Prof Breeze felt that he could surely manage the last part of the journey unaided. Once again, this proved the difficult bit and he arrived about an hour later than planned. (Richard Hornsey solved the problem after the meeting of finding the professor somewhere to stay for the night!)

Julie Chandler had to cancel her talk in November because the train strikes meant she would not have been able to get back home to London. David Underwood provided an entertaining last-minute talk. Finally, Andrew Brammer had to brave snow and ice, in an electric car, to travel down from Norfolk for our December meeting when he provided some amusing memories of Dunstable in the 1970s. He remembered in particular our late members Omer Roucoux and Joan Curran, both very sadly missed.

The latter event revived your society's tradition of holding a more light-hearted meeting in December, with festive food and drink. This proved to be, I think, a bit of a triumph, thanks in particular to the sterling catering efforts of Liz Bentley and my wife Lynn.

TREVOR TURVEY

It is very sad to report the death of Trevor Turvey, soon after he had gone into care following a fall at his home at Wellhead. Trevor was a fount of local knowledge, going back to the days when his parents ran the Red Lion at Houghton Regis and the Green Man at the chalk cutting, and the times when he was one of the chief chemists working at AC-Delco. He had been President of the Old Dunstablians and of course, a member of this history society where he had organised tea and coffee at our meetings. His wife, Cynthia, had

been our treasurer for many years. They had fond memories of some adventurous holidays together, particularly some motorbike tours all around the Continent.

We had been planning to hold a history society garden party at Trevor's home but Covid intervened and then, would you believe, we were delayed by a colony of badgers which had systematically wrecked his lawn. I thought at first that there would just be a few holes to be filled in, but they had left it looking like a ploughed field.

OTHER DEATHS

There were two other deaths last year which I think ought to be mentioned, because they have been overlooked by many Dunstable people. Roy Davis, a former leader of Luton Council, had championed the building of the Dunstable-Luton busway along the route of the old railway line. It was a very controversial enterprise, and Cllr Davis endured a good deal of criticism, but it has subsequently proved a great boon to many people.

And Dennis Keech, the industrialist whose donations supported the Keech Hospice in Luton, was a member of the committee which erected the Market Cross at The Square in Dunstable, created to mark the start of the new millennium. The cost of the clock was met by local fund-raising but Mr Keech was, anonymously, a substantial donor.

CALENDAR

Your society, once again, provided many of the photos for the annual calendar produced by the Don't Let Dunstable Die website. And I hope you like the new design for the history society's annual membership card, created by David Turner, editor of this newsletter. It features a Roman soldier and we will have different characters from local history on later cards. Please don't forget to renew your membership for 2023...we are sending this newsletter to a number of people who haven't yet paid, in the hope that they've merely overlooked our reminder.

POPPY APPEAL

Thank-you to the 17 society members who helped raise money for the Poppy Appeal in November. There's no longer a local branch of the Royal British Legion so to some extent we have stepped into the breach. The amount raised by us in 2022 was £41,176.15, with donations for wreaths and from church collections to be added separately.

John Buckledee



*The history society was pleased to provide a little help to Sid Hudson with the research for his new book, *From Soul Boy To Soul Man*, which is the story of the enormously popular Cali-R Reunion events which Sid has been organising here for the past 25 years. In particular, we traced the page in the *Dunstable Gazette* in 1973 which featured this photo of the very young dj, nicknamed then as *Soulful Sid*, playing soul music at the old *Greyhound pub* in High Street South. Sid's book is on sale at *The Workhouse* in Ashton Square, price £16.*

The Legends of Dun The Robber...



...THE KING'S DREAM AND DUNSTABLE'S COAT OF ARMS

The story of Dun The Robber is first recorded in the 'Tractus de Dunstaple et de Houcton', which was written at the Priory between 1280 and 1290 in medieval Latin.

It was published and translated by the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, volume 19, in 1937. The reference to Dun is quite brief. 'The area where Watling and Icknield meet was first cleared by Henry King of England the elder (Henry I) in order to bridle a most famous robber, Dun by name, and his band whence the name of the vill of Dunstable came and from that same Dun the place was called Dunstaple.' The notes by the editor dismiss this as legend and say that the name refers to a market at the foot of the downs. There is no mention in the Tractus of any plot to capture Dun, using the King's ring held on a post by a staple. Despite this, the town's coat of arms has associations with this myth.

THE KING'S DREAM

The story of Dun the Robber has many similarities to that of The King's Dream.

The story of The King's Dream originated in the Chronicle of John of Worcester (died 1140). Our version is that Henry I had a dream in which the people of Dunstable complained to him about the lawless state of the roads leading into their town. This resulted in the felling of trees bordering both highways. This story is commemorated in the west windows of the Priory Church. In October 1971, Sir Bernard Miles starred as the Man Of The Chilterns in a Son et Lumiere called The King's Dream, which was performed at the Priory Church. The play was in 12 scenes and went from the founding of the Priory to the English Civil War. There was no mention of Dun the Robber.

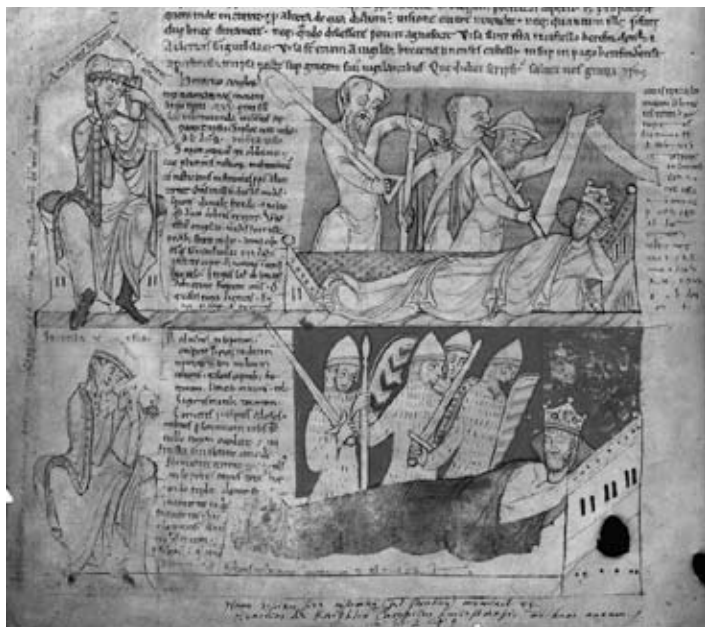


Fig 1 – the Chronicle of John of Worcester, depicting Henry I's four dreams

HENRY I'S DREAMS

According to the Chronicle of John of Worcester, Henry I had four dreams – or nightmares. (fig 1) In the first, a group of angry rustics presented him with a petition. In the second, he was terrorised by a group of bloodthirsty knights. In the third, a group of clerics complained about the royal plunder of their churches.



Fig 2 ale warmer



Fig 3 ale warmer with handle



Fig 4 the Priory Church Register



Fig 5 the old police station in Icknield Street



Fig 6 the Grove House version



Fig 7 seen locally



Fig 8 Team Ministry logo



Fig 9 the History Society logo

In the last, he was at sea in a storm and in fear of his life. This last dream may have associations with the loss of his eldest son and heir in 1120, when the White Ship went down in the Channel. As a result, according to the Chronicle, Henry I suspended the land tax of Danegeld, went on pilgrimage to St. Edmund's shrine and promised good government in the future. In all this, there is no mention of Dunstable. The only reference to our town 'Dunstapolam' in this Chronicle is of King Stephen holding court here in December 1137.

ALE-WARMER

Dunstable's coat of arms is based on those of our Augustinian Priory, featuring a staple on which a horse could be tethered. The design is thought by some to be a pun on the town's old name of Dunstaple. Curiously, the device was defined as "argent an ale-warmer inside a black engrailed border" in the Book of Public Arms written by Arthur Fox-Davies in 1915. That description has been picked up by the modern website, Heraldry of the World, which has produced the illustration in fig 2. In medieval times, an ale-warmer was a cone-shaped vessel with a handle (fig 3). Ale, possibly spiced, was poured in and the point stuck in the fire to heat the contents. These were then poured out, ready for consumption. At some point before 1600 the shape was adapted to the story of Dun the Robber (fig 4) on the front of the Priory Church Register. The association has been carried forward into the present day. The 1867 Police Station in Icknield Street (fig 5) shows the 'post and ring' emblem. WH Derbyshire in his 'The Late Victorian History of Dunstable' of 1872 recounts the tale of Dun the Robber, which, like Topsy, grew at every telling. Charles Lamborn in his 'The Dunstapleogia' 1859, refers to it as 'a superstition'. Worthington G Smith, in his 'Dunstable its History & Surroundings' 1904, refers to the Dun story as 'a popular tradition'. Grove House has the current version (fig 6) and this can also be seen in various places around the town. (fig 7) It has been used by our Anglican Team Ministry (fig 8) and by our own Augustinian Society (fig 9). If the Priory image (fig 2) had only had one loop (fig 3) the association with Dun might never have been made. The ale-warmer is still reflected in the shape of the post. Note also, the position of the 'ring' on the 'post'. In figs 4, 5, 8 and 9 the ring is hanging down. In 6 and 7 it is horizontal.

Hugh Garrod

Dunstable Photographers continued



At the beginning of the 20th century photography was still a relatively new art.

Trevor Hunt has been researching the history of Dunstable's pioneer photographers and has collected many examples of their work. He has written a series of articles, concentrating on the photographers who began operating here in the decades before the First World War. We continue the series of his research.

HARRY CLARKE



Harry Clarke

Henry Clarke was born on 21st July 1850 at Woburn, Bedfordshire. From a young age he was known as Harry. His parents were Josiah and Caroline Clarke. Josiah was a grocer and tea dealer whose home and shop, for over forty years, was at 19 Bedford Street, Woburn. His mother was a dressmaker as well as an assistant in the shop. On the 1851 census Harry was recorded as just eight months old. In 1861

Harry was recorded as a scholar living in Bedford Street, Woburn. Harry was still living at home in 1871 – working as a printer.

On 17th April 1873 Harry married Maria Cook (born 6th April 1849) at Aspley Guise, Bedfordshire. In a photographer's directory, Harry is listed as a photographer at Aspley Guise in 1877. However, it seems photography was just a sideline to his main occupation as a printer. Harry probably worked at Powage Press in Aspley Guise which started trading in the early 1870's.

At the time of the 1881 census Harry and his wife, Maria, were living in Church Street, Aspley Guise, probably at the Post Office as Harry was listed as Printer and Postmaster. The couple had three children living at home, Elizabeth, Albert and Walter.

Another daughter, Annie, was born at Aspley Guise in 1881.

Around 1882 the family moved to Dunstable and they lived in the town until around 1889. Two children were born in Dunstable during this period. Ernest was born at 7 Edward Street, Dunstable, in January 1883. Harry was described as a printer on Ernest's birth certificate. Minnie was born at 73 Princes Street, Dunstable, in September 1887. Again Harry was described as a printer on Minnie's birth certificate. It seems Harry's main occupation was that of a printer during this period in Dunstable but photography, as previously, was a side-line.

The photo right, reproduced courtesy of Bedfordshire Records Office, shows an unknown Dunstable fireman around the early to mid 1880s.

All records suggest Harry was the main Dunstable photographer during the 1880s after the death of Frederick S Mills in 1880.

In 1889 the family moved to Luton where another daughter, Florence, was born in 1890.

In 1891 Harry, Maria and their seven children were living at 222 Wellington Street, Luton. Harry was working as a printing compositor.

A Luton directory of 1894 records Harry as a photographer at 222 Wellington Street, Luton. In all probability his main occupation was that of a printer but he also traded in his own name as a photographer.

Harry's daughter, Elizabeth, married in July 1898. It appears the family were living at 36 Bury Park Road, Luton. Harry was described as a printer on the wedding certificate. In 1901 Harry, Maria and three of their children, were still living at 36 Bury Park Road, Luton, and the census records Harry still working as a printing compositor.

By 1911 the family had returned to Dunstable. Harry, his wife and two youngest daughters, Minnie and Florence, were living at 44 Victoria Street. Harry now aged 60 was recorded as a self-employed photographer. The 1911 census records the couple had had nine children during their marriage but two of the children had died.

Harry, his wife and two youngest daughters were still at 44 Victoria Street in 1913 but had moved by 1915.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find details of Harry's death but family members believe he died around 1928.

Apart from the photograph of the fireman no other Dunstable photos have been found which can be directly attributed to Harry.



Harry Clarke's photo of an unknown fireman

PERCY VLAKO TURNER

Percy Vlako Turner was born on the 20th January 1868 at The Terrace, Spilsby, Lincolnshire. Percy's father was William Vlako Turner who at the time was Vicar of Spilsby. Percy's mother was Emma Turner formerly Emma Pitches. Percy's father, William, was born in Ragusa, Damatia (now Dubrovnik in Croatia) and this is a clue to a privileged background. William's father and Percy's grandfather was Thomas Turner who at one time was Her Royal Majesty's Consul in Panama.

At the time of the 1871 Census, Percy and his family were still living at The Terrace, Spilsby, Lincolnshire, and his father was still the Vicar of Spilsby.

In 1881 Percy, now 13, was a boarder at the Grammar School in West Street, Alford, Spilsby, Lincolnshire but his family were now living at Bardney, Lincolnshire, where his father was the vicar.

By 1890 Kelly's directory listed Percy as a photographer at 14



Percy Vlako Turner's delightful photo of two young girls

continued over

High Street South, Dunstable. In the same year Percy exhibited a photograph at the annual exhibition of the Royal Photograph Society so he was clearly an established photographer with some experience even at the relatively young age of 22.

The 1891 Census shows Percy, aged 23, living at 14 High Street South, Dunstable. The head of the household was his father, William Vlako Turner. Also at the address was William's wife, Emma and their daughter Edith who was 28 and described as a photographer's assistant, no doubt to Percy.

By 1894 Percy had moved to 23 High Street North, Dunstable. The National Archives at Kew have a poster showing five Dunstable views produced by Percy in July 1894. Percy went to the trouble of registering the copyright to the five photos shown in the poster. The five views show Ashton Grammar School, the Priory Church, High Street North, High Street South and the Downs. The photo of High Street North appears to have been taken from immediately outside his studio looking back to the crossroads.

Percy's father, William, died in 1899 at 23 High Street North. The 1901 Census shows Percy, 33, as a photographer and frame maker still living at 23 High Street North with his mother Emma, his sister Edith, who was described as a housekeeper, a domestic servant, and a photographer's assistant, George Viner.

Percy seems to have left Dunstable in early 1902. In March of that year, Herbert A Strange was advertising in the Dunstable Gazette as 'successor to P Vlako Turner'.

During 1902 Percy entered into a partnership with Arthur Wright, who originated from Tring in Hertfordshire. The partnership traded under the name of Arthur Wright as photographers at 54 Whitby Street, West Hartlepool. However, the partnership was short-lived and it was officially dissolved on 28th February 1903 by mutual consent.

By 1910 Percy had changed his life completely. He was now 42. On 15th November 1910 he married Margaret Timms at St John the Evangelist Church, in the parish of Walton on the Hill, Lancaster. Percy was now living at Sand Hutton, Yorkshire and he was shown as a motor driver.

The 1911 Census shows Percy and Margaret living at The Hall, Sand Hutton, Yorkshire where he was working as a domestic chauffeur to Sir Robert Walker who was born at Hockliffe, Bedfordshire. Percy's wife, Margaret, was a lady's maid working at the same address. Percy and Margaret do not appear to have had any children during their marriage.

Percy died aged 47 on 2nd April 1915 at Sand Hutton, Yorkshire. Cause of death was recorded as Sarcoma of Filum and Asthenia. He left an estate valued at £580.

Three of Percy's photos are held at the Bedfordshire Records Office. They include a portrait photo of the Reverend William Wedge, vicar of Houghton Regis, with his dog taken around 1890. They also hold a photo of a wedding party posing outside a brick and slate house probably about 1895 and a photo of Eaton Bray Church from around 1890.

The series will continue in the next newsletter

Trevor Hunt



The Dunstable Excelsior Band c 1900 photo by Percy Vlako Turner



A Horse & Carriage at the Sugar Loaf in 1892 photo by Percy Vlako Turner



Horse & Small Carriage c 1895 photo by Percy Vlako Turner



The Dunstable Fire Brigade c 1896 photo by Percy Vlako Turner

The Lost Windmills of Eaton Bray



I became interested in Eaton Bray when I discovered that several generations of my ancestors held the lease on a watermill there called Bellows Mill. The last of them, William Dyer, came to an unfortunate end.

FOUR WATERMILLS

Thomas Jefferys' 1765 map of Bedfordshire shows four watermills in the vicinity of Eaton Bray (Fig. 1). The name Eaton comes from the Old English 'eitone', meaning a river settlement. This and the abundance of watermills bear witness to the plentiful and reliable water supply from the springs at the foot of the Dunstable Downs. Although windmills were also once commonplace, few have survived, and they tend to be less well documented than watermills.¹ Local newspapers and old maps helped me to locate a lost windmill of Eaton Bray and discover the story behind it.

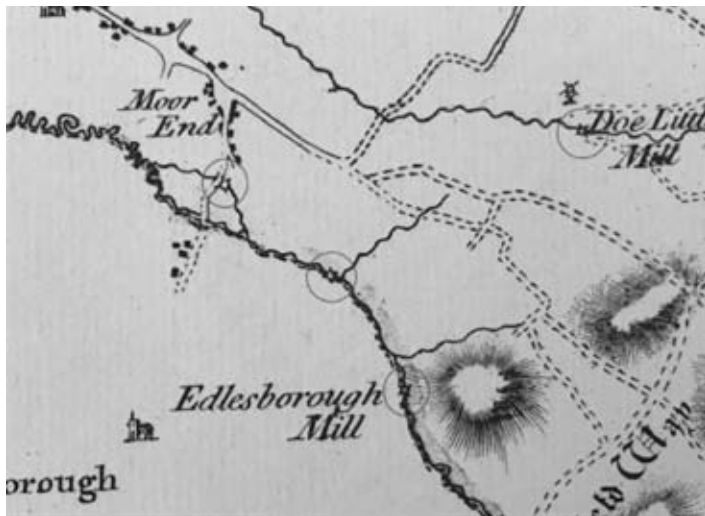


Fig. 1: Section of Jefferys' 1765 map of Bedfordshire (Bedfordshire Archives Service) showing four watermills near Eaton Bray (circled).

WILLIAM DYER

At 10 a.m. on 6 July 1846, William Dyer of Eaton Bray appeared before the Insolvent Debtors' Court at Shire Hall in Bedford.² He had by then been in custody for four months for debts owed 'for bricks, timber, &c., used in building a wind-mill which he stated did not answer his expectations' (Fig. 2). Although discharged

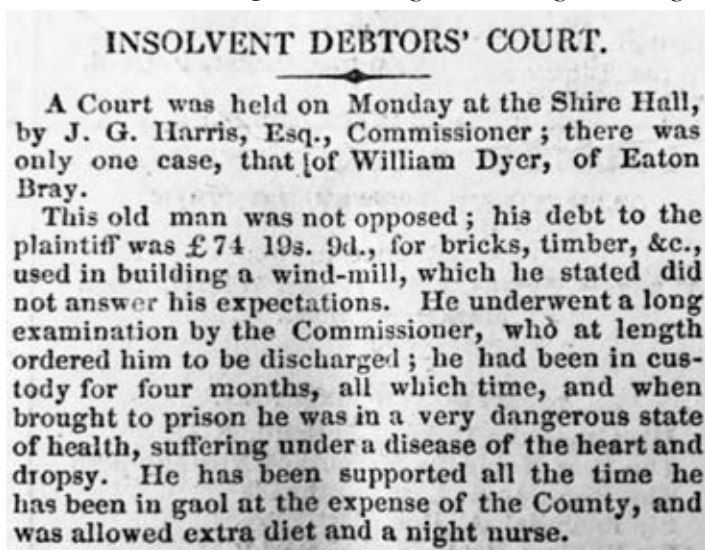


Fig. 2: Court report in Bedfordshire Times (11 July 1846), Bedfordshire Archives Service.

from prison, he died five days later at Eaton Bray, aged 66.³ Records held by Bedfordshire Archives Service show that William Dyer had held the lease on Bellows Mill, a watermill in Eaton Bray, since 1821 and that this mill had been in his family since 1732. By the time of his court appearance, however, the lease had been taken over by William Simmons.⁴ A court report from the Bedfordshire Mercury, dated 8 November 1845, provides a glimpse of the crisis into which these events must have plunged the Dyer family. It includes the following account of an attempt by William Dyer's son, Richard, to break into what had been his father's property: 'Dyer's father holds, or rather did hold, Eaton Bray Mill, and he becoming involved, wished to make over his property to his son; this, however, the creditors would not allow. The mill was eventually placed in the hands of trustees, one of whom was Mr Simmons, when the defendant comes and makes a forcible entry, and carries away two keys'.⁵ Eaton Bray Mill is one of a number of names by which Bellows Mill has been known (Fig. 3).

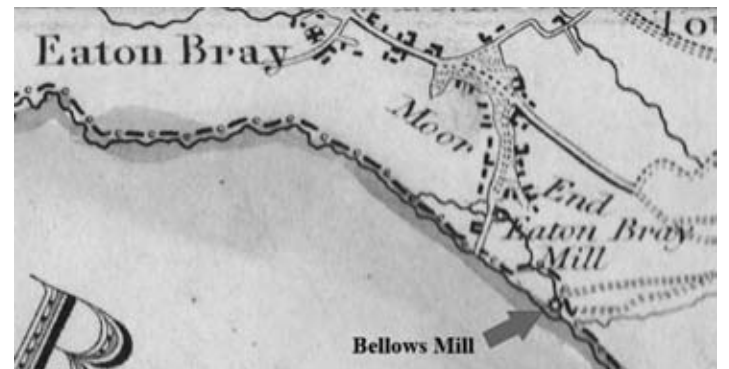


Fig. 3: Section of Andrew Bryant's 1826 Map of Bedfordshire with Bellows Mill labelled as Eaton Bray Mill



Fig. 4: Advertisement in Bucks Herald (3 September 1842)

EDLESBOROUGH WINDMILL

It seems plausible that the windmill William Dyer mentioned in court was the one advertised for sale by auction in the Bucks Herald on 3 September 1842 (Fig. 4). Not only was it described as being 'newly erected' to the south of the parish of Eaton Bray, but it was being sold 'peremptorily' (by court order). Even more tellingly, the windmill was at the time 'in the occupation of Mr. William Dyer'. I wanted to find out whether the windmill described in the 1842 auction advertisement could be one that still exists. The obvious candidate was Edlesborough Windmill. This windmill stands next to a watermill which is just a quarter of a mile upstream of Bellows Mill. Although the windmill has been converted to a house and so no longer has its sails or machinery, an auction advertisement in the Bucks Herald from July 1883 confirms that it had a similar design to the windmill described in the 1842 advertisement.⁶ It could have been built in 1840, as it does not appear on Bryant's 1826 map (which recorded

continued over

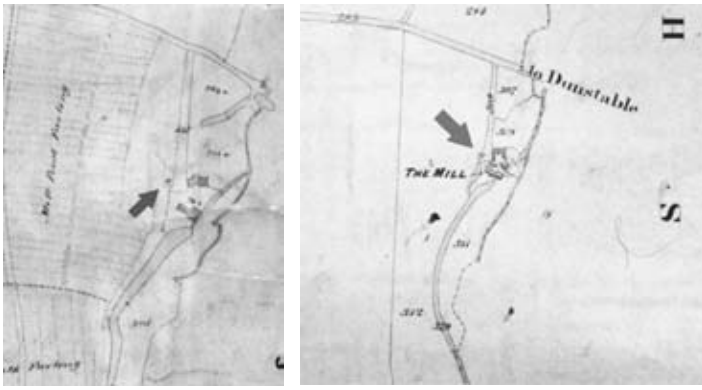


Fig. 5: On both the 1840 (left) and 1875 (right) tithe maps of Edlesborough, a circle marks the site where a windmill still stands

windmills), while circles on the 1840 and 1875 tithe maps of Edlesborough suggest that the windmill has existed since 1840 (Fig. 5). Although Edlesborough Windmill is not in Eaton Bray, the watermill straddles the parish boundary formed by the River Ouzel. The deeds of the watermill can be consulted at the Mills Archive in Reading, and one of these documents, dated 1781, refers to the property as 'a messuage, watermill and lands at Edlesborough, Eaton Bray'.⁷ Other than this, however, there are no references to Edlesborough Mill being in Eaton Bray parish or having being known as Eaton Bray Mill. The windmill is clearly on the Buckinghamshire side of the river, and there is no evidence of the boundary having changed at this location. The windmill in the 1842 advertisement was described not only as being in Bedfordshire but as 'offering a Vote for the County'. Might another windmill have existed that was near Edlesborough Mill but on the Bedfordshire side of the boundary?

MR HAWKIN'S MILL

The only other windmill still standing nearby is Doolittle Mill, but this mill was in the parish of Totternhoe until 1985.⁸ A newspaper report found by Rita Swift in an old issue of the Dunstable Borough Gazette ('Windmill for Sale' (2007), Dunstable & District Local History Society Newsletter, 28, p. 204) provides persuasive evidence that another one did once exist, however. The report describes the sale of Houghton Regis Windmill at auction in January 1874 and relates how the auctioneer, Mr Derbyshire, entertained the prospective buyers with an account of the neighbouring windmills: 'He had often noticed too, when taking a stroll upon Dunstable Downs on a calm summer evening, looking towards Eaton Bray, he could see the Doolittle Mill was becalmed, Mr Simmond's and Mr Hawkin's Mills were lazily moving, but when he turned towards Houghton Mill he saw the sails spinning round, and the mill appeared a monument of industry'. Based on the auction date, 'Mr Hawkin's Mill' is likely to have been Edlesborough Windmill, as William Hawkins was recorded as the miller at Edlesborough Mill in the 1871 and 1881 Censuses,⁹ and there is no record of the property being occupied by a member of the Simmons family until 1890.¹⁰

MR SIMMONDS' WINDMILL

If 'Mr Hawkin's Mill' was Edlesborough Windmill, though, where was 'Mr Simmonds' windmill? According to the lease documents, Frederick Simmons was the occupant of Bellows Mill at the time.¹¹ Did he own a windmill as well as a watermill? A court report from July 1874 suggests that he did. Appearing as a witness, he stated the following: 'I... carry on the business of a miller at Eaton Bray, in Bedfordshire, and farm about 30 acres of land... I have a watermill and a windmill adjoining'.¹² The 1874 tithe map of Eaton Bray shows that Simmons' land adjoined that of Edlesborough Mill,¹³ but could another windmill, besides Edlesborough Windmill, have been described as 'adjoining' Bellows Mill, one which has since disappeared?

POST MILL

Bedfordshire Historic Environment (HER) Record no. ~2827 mentions a post mill in Eaton Bray, near the junction of Doolittle Lane and Harling Road, that was demolished around 1890. Although this site is near Edlesborough Mill, it can be ruled out because the windmill in the 1842 advertisement was a tower mill.¹⁴ Hidden within HER Record no. 2827, however (presumably in error), is a reference to another disappeared windmill. This windmill was mentioned in an article written in 1931 by J. Steele Elliott, who carried out a detailed survey of Bedfordshire windmills. It contained the following description: '1 mile ESE of the Church and on the N side of the road opposite lane leading to Bellows Water Mill, stood a brick tower-mill (B.C.M AT13). Demolished c1880'.¹⁵



Fig. 6a: A circle on the 1849 tithe map documents the possible presence of a windmill opposite the end of the lane leading to Bellows Mill

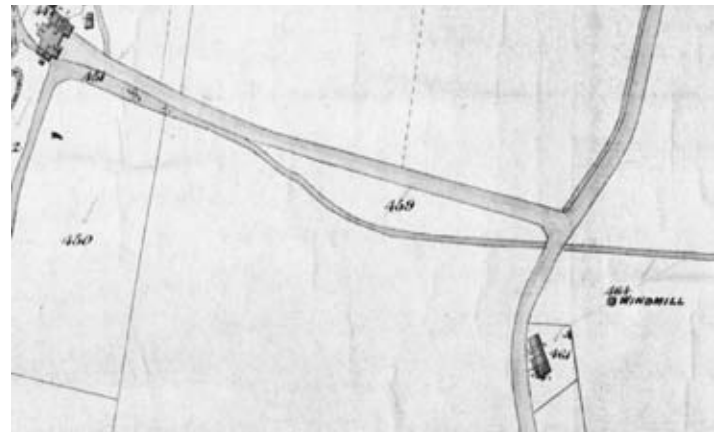


Fig. 6b: Plot 464 at the same location on the 1874 tithe map is actually labelled as a windmill



Fig. 6c: By 1880, the windmill had disappeared (Ordnance Survey (1880), Eaton Bray and Edlesborough, map, 25 inch

The second part of this map reference (AT13) is the reference number still used by the Bedfordshire Archives Service for tithe maps of Eaton Bray. When I consulted the 1874 tithe map in Bedford, I found a windmill clearly labelled at the position mentioned in the 1931 article (Fig. 6b), and a circle at the same site on the 1849 tithe map (Fig. 6a) suggests that the windmill already existed by that date. By 1880, it had disappeared (Fig. 6c). Its proximity to Bellows Mill and its position at the end of the lane leading to the watermill means that it could be described as 'adjoining' Bellows Mill.



Fig. 7: A circular feature on this satellite image could be evidence of a former tower mill at this exact location

GOOGLE EARTH

An examination of the site using Google Earth revealed a circular feature suggestive of the former existence of a windmill at this exact location (Fig. 7). With industrial archaeology techniques, it might be possible to confirm this and the site of the former post mill in Eaton Bray, while records relating to drainage work and road building might shed some light on demolition dates.

Anne Partlett

- 1 H. Howes, *Bedfordshire Mills* (1983), Biggleswade, p. 15.
- 2 'At the Court-House, at Bedford', *The London Gazette* (19 June 1846), issue 20615, p. 2291, *The Gazette*, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk> (consulted 30 May 2022).
- 3 'The Insolvent, Dyer, who obtained his discharge last week', *Bedfordshire Times* (18 July 1846), *Bedfordshire Archives Service*; Certified copy of death certificate for William Dyer, Leighton Buzzard Registration District, 11.07.1846, *General Register Office*, Application Number 13162464-1
- 4 Leases of Bellows Mill to: John Dyer of Eaton Bray, 3 June 1732 and 14 April 1744, X196/9-10; Mary Dyer, widow of John, 6 March 1779, X196/11; Samuel Dyer, 20 January 1798, X196/12; William Dyer, 20 April 1821, X196/13, *Bedfordshire Archives Service*, in 'Bellows Mill Eaton Bray', *Community Histories: Eaton Bray*, Bedfordshire Archives, <https://www.bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk> (consulted 24 April 2022); Lease of Bellows Mill to William Simmons, 5 April 1846, *Bedfordshire Archives Service*, X196/14.
- 5 'Forcible entrance', *Bedfordshire Mercury* (8 November 1845), p. 3, *The British Newspaper Archive*, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> (consulted 30 May 2022).
- 6 'Valuable Freehold Property, known as the Edlesborough Mills Estate', advertisement, *Bucks Herald* (5 July 1883), p. 4, *The British Newspaper Archive*, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> (consulted 29 April 2022).
- 7 Deeds of Edlesborough Watermill and Lands (1762-1883), Alan Stoyel Foundation, *Mills Archive*, Reading, ASFC-DEW.
- 8 'Doolittle Mills Totternhoe', *Community Histories: Totternhoe*, Bedfordshire Archives, <https://www.bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk> (consulted 20 May 2022).
- 9 'William Hawkins: Miller, Edlesborough Mill', extracts from the Censuses of England and Wales for 1871, Parish of Edlesborough, RG10/1565, Folio 17, page 22, and for 1881, Parish of Edlesborough, RG11/1645, Folio 13, page 18, <https://www.ancestry.com> (consulted 10 May 2022).
- 10 M. Farley, E. Legg, J. Venn (eds), *The Watermills of Buckinghamshire* (2007), Aylesbury, p. 54.
- 11 Lease of Bellows Mill to Frederick Simmons, 24 May 1867, WE1307, and 22 September 1887, X196/15, *Bedfordshire Archives Service*.
- 12 'Eaton Bray. Breach of Promise of Marriage', *Leighton Buzzard Observer and Linslade Gazette* (7 July 1874), p. 3, *The British Newspaper Archive*, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> (consulted 29 April 2022).
- 13 Tithe Map of Eaton Bray (Parish), 1874 (unpublished document), *Eaton Bray: Altered apportionment (after enclosure). Map annexed. Whole parish. 1875*, Bedfordshire Archives Service, AT13/5A.
- 14 J.K. Major, *The Windmills and Watermills of Bedfordshire* (1967), in HER Record No. 2827.
- 15 J. Steele Elliott, 'The windmills of Bedfordshire, past and present' (1931), *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, vol. 14, p. 17, in HER Record No. 2827.

Greeting New Members



We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members:

Harry Buckledee Cornel Carausu Nick and Mo Hill
Daniel Toth John Trevor Mary White

Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of
Trevor Turvey

Memories of old Dunstable



The newsletters of Dunstable's Manshead Archaeological Society have now been added to the collection in the history society's research rooms at Grove House.

A LITTLE-KNOWN BATTLE FOUGHT IN DUNSTABLE

The 2002 issue includes an article by Mark Morgan which mentions a little-known battle fought in Dunstable on February 16, 1461.

This was just before the Second Battle of St Albans, during the Wars of the Roses, when a Lancastrian army defeated the Earl of Warwick's Yorkist troops and freed King Henry VI from captivity. The Lancastrians, numbering 12,000, surprised Warwick's army by an unorthodox manoeuvre which brought them from Hitchin through Dunstable and enabled them to outflank the Yorkists' prepared defences north of St Albans.

There were some Yorkist troops in Dunstable, led by a local butcher, who tried to stop the whirlwind advance of the Lancastrians. The Dunstable men, probably raw recruits, were easily defeated.

Mark Morgan quotes a reference from the so-called Gregory's Chronicle of medieval times which says that the Dunstable men were led by a butcher of the same town. Soon after their defeat

"the butcher, for the shame of his simple guiding and the loss of his men, to the number of 800, for very sorrow it is said, hanged himself."

After the Dunstable battle, the Lancastrian army camped nearby and the next day set off for St Albans down the Watling Street, crossing the River Ver at dawn.

THE DUNSTABLE MOTOR CLUB

A query in the last newsletter about the badge of the Dunstable Motor Club brought a response from society member Martin Wild who has discovered that the club seems to have been involved with motorbikes rather than cars. It was affiliated to the Auto Cycle Union, South Midland Centre, 1934-52.

SAD NEWS

We've received a letter from Pauline Wolsey telling us that she will no longer be able to attend our monthly meetings. This is sad news indeed.

Pauline's husband Barry died recently and without his help to drive her to Dunstable she can no longer tackle the Tuesday-night journey.

continued over

Pauline is a fount of local knowledge, particularly about Luton where she served as Mayor in 1988. In that year Luton Town FC defeated Arsenal 3-2 in a memorable League Cup final at Wembley, sending the area into a frenzy of jubilation.

Pauline hosted the civic reception for the players afterwards and, as a football fan herself, was particularly thrilled by the successes of the Hatters' team of that time.

Pauline had been a Tottenham supporter in earlier times and can reminisce about seeing Alf Ramsey play for the Spurs.

QUERY ABOUT AN ENGLISH CIVIL WAR MUTINY

We have been trying, with little success, to answer a query about the Ware mutiny, which took place during the English Civil War.

A book is being prepared about Oliver Cromwell's confrontation with some of his own troops at Ware, near Hertford, in November 1647. The men were refusing to sign a declaration of loyalty and Cromwell had one of them shot.

We were asked if the mutiny had spread along the Watling Street as far as Dunstable. So far, we have been able to find no records of any such incidents, apart from a mention of a "council of war" held by the mutineers at Hockley, which would be Hockley-in-the-Hole (the old name for Hockliffe). But the research has led us down some fascinating byways.

Oliver Cromwell himself was in Dunstable in November 1642 possibly on a recruiting mission. The Puritans supported him but seemed less keen to fight. Eighty out of a cohort of 150 men levied in Bedfordshire as Parliamentary troops absconded 1642-3.

That information comes from a new book by Mike Osborne, *Defending Bedfordshire, the Military Landscape from Pre-History to the Present Day*, which was available at the Bedfordshire Local History Association's annual conference last year.

During the long war Dunstable was on the border between areas controlled either by the Parliamentarians or Royalists so it was damaged by soldiers from both sides. The ebb and flow of the battles affected Dunstable in a very particular way – the destruction of the Eleanor Cross which had been a great landmark in Dunstable for over three centuries.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ELEANOR CROSS

The cross was wrecked in 1643 by Parliamentary soldiers. Exactly when or why this happened is unclear but it was not accidental vandalism – it would have been hard work to destroy such a substantial stone structure.

There is perhaps a clue in the Dunstable parish register which records that on July 25 1643 a man named John Plant was buried at the Priory Church. The register particularly records that he was a servant of the Earl of Essex, the Roundhead commander.

The register gives no other details and why Plant died here is a mystery. We've consulted a book by Chris Scott and Alan Turton, *Hey For Old Robin*, covering the campaigns and armies of the Earl of Essex between 1642 and 1644, but the obscure piece of Dunstable information which we need is not mentioned. (Alan, incidentally, is the husband of Dunstable history society member Nicola Turton).

Interestingly, the Parliamentarians had just suffered a crushing defeat at the battle of Roundway Down near Devizes. That was on July 13. Had some angry survivors of the battle arrived in Dunstable by July 25 and vented their frustrations on the cross?

An alternative theory is that in October 1643 a large detachment of Parliamentary soldiers from the army led by the Earl of Essex, on their way to attack the Royalists holding Newport Pagnell, came into Dunstable where a fair was being held "and made great spoile". It was reported that the soldiers became angry because

the townspeople had not welcomed them or invited them into their homes. Was this the occasion when the cross was damaged?

SHOTS FIRED AT MINISTER

There was a very well-known incident in June 1644, when the king and his men passed through Hockliffe on their way to Bedford. Royalist cavalry entered Dunstable while the people were at church.

They fired shots at the minister in his pulpit in the Priory Church.

THE LANDLORD OF THE RED LION INN WAS ALSO KILLED

They also killed the landlord of the Red Lion, Mr Platt, who was trying to prevent them from taking his horses.

In June 1645, after his defeat at Naseby, King Charles stayed at the same Red Lion, where presumably he would not have been a welcome visitor.

Fleeing Royalist soldiers after their defeat at St Neots in 1648 were found hiding in the fields around Luton. Royalist soldiers made their way to Bridge Street, Luton, where nine were killed in a skirmish.

THE DUNSTABLE HUNT

We've written before about the Dunstable Hunt, apparently founded by the Marquess of Tavistock, whose portrait by Joshua Reynolds is in the Breakfast Room at Woburn Abbey. The Marquess, son of the 4th Duke of Bedford, was portrayed wearing the riding habit of the Dunstable Hunt – a white coat, blue-cuffed, with a blue waistcoat. He died as the result of a hunting accident in 1767.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD CHURCH CLOCK

A clock at All Saints Church in Leighton Buzzard once played a tune called The Dunstable Hunt to mark the passing hour. We've been asking about this over the years and the subject has been researched by Chris Pickford, a former Bedfordshire archivist, who is an expert on Bedfordshire belfries.

He's summarised what is known as follows:

The clock and chimes are listed in the 1709 terrier, indicating that the original mechanisms dated from the 17th century or earlier.

An article in the Leighton Buzzard Observer of 21 December 1898 discussed the origins of the then existing chime machine, suggesting that it was probably made about a hundred years earlier, possibly by local whitesmith William Drage whose descendants became clock and watchmakers.

WOBURN CHURCH CLOCK

In 1818 S. Dodd's book on 'Woburn' mentions 'a ring of eight bells and a set of chimes', which is what is listed – plus 'a church clock' – in the 1822 terrier.

In 1852 the chimes were put in order after the spire was repaired following lightning damage.

Ten years later, in 1862, Charles White of London bore the cost of restoring the clock and 'setting the chiming machinery in complete repair'. The work was carried out by Moore of Clerkenwell.

In the later 19th century Vicar's commonplace book there is an undated list of the tunes played. These were 1. Psalm Bedford, 2. Come to the Bower, 3. Balance of straw, 4. Dunstable hunt, 5. Captain & his whiskers, 6. Money musk.

The chimes disappeared long ago and the mechanical clock was replaced by a Smith of Derby synchronous movement and hour-strike unit.

So it is definitely true that one of the tunes was called "Dunstable Hunt". All but one of the tunes were secular too. However, there's no information on what the tune was.

John Buckledee